United Nations A/71/211–S/2016/655

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
26 July 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Item 63 (b) of the provisional agenda*
New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/292, reviews progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/65/152-S/2010/526).

The present report covers the period from July 2015 to June 2016 and highlights major developments regarding peace and security and its interaction with socioeconomic development in Africa. It examines the progress made by the United Nations system in implementing key priority areas identified in the review report, as well as the support the Organization has been providing in the implementation of the peace and security priorities contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union and its first 10-year implementation plan (2014-2023).

* A/71/150.

16-12449 (E) 260816

Please recycle

Consistent with the mandate of General Assembly resolution 70/292 to develop policy proposals on persistent and emerging challenges confronting Africa, the present report addresses the issue of women's human rights as the basis for sustainable peace and security in Africa. That thematic focus aligns with the African Union's declared theme for 2016, the "African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women". The report also presents concrete recommendations to, inter alia, uphold and enhance the rights and roles of women as key drivers and partners in the quest to achieve, in particular, the Agenda 2063 goal of "silencing the guns by 2020" to end all wars in Africa by 2020, as well as Goal 5, on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and Goal 16, on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective and accountable institutions, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I. Introduction

1. Following a request from the Security Council (S/PRST/1997/46), my predecessor undertook, in 1998, a comprehensive analysis of the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The subsequent report proposed specific measures to significantly reduce conflict, build peace and promote inclusive development in Africa (see A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2. In its resolution 63/304, the General Assembly requested me to submit a report reviewing the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report. Following broad-based consultations, including with the United Nations system through the Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs, coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, I issued a review report outlining progress, recommendations and proposals for a renewed engagement with Africa (see A/65/152-S/2010/526).

3. Pursuant to additional requests of the General Assembly, in its successive resolutions on the subject, I continue to submit annually a progress report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, focusing, inter alia, on persistent and emerging challenges and innovative solutions and measures for their redress. In that context and in support of the decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union to declare 2016 the "African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women", the present report focuses on the important role of women's human rights in advancing sustainable peace and security in Africa.

4. The report highlights the complementarities and synergies between the gender equality and women's empowerment aspirations and goals contained in Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, and those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It underscores the importance of ensuring the full rights of African women and girls in peace and security, including in the implementation of the outcomes of the 2015 reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, as well as the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

II. Year in review

5. During the review period, there were major thematic and country-specific developments regarding peace and security in Africa. Thematically, we embarked on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes Africa's specific challenges and reaffirms the importance of supporting Agenda 2063 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The 2030 Agenda also underscores the significance of respecting women's rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as the basis for progress across all its goals and targets.

6. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 are complementary, demonstrating a shared vision and commitment to the pursuit of inclusive, sustainable development. Both agendas share similar strategic principles, focusing on people, peace, justice, human rights, prosperity, environmental sustainability and mutually accountable partnerships. Their effective implementation

in Africa will necessitate not only strong political will, leadership and accountability, but also joint approaches at operational levels to ensure harmonization and the maximization of resources. For Africa, implementation of the 2030 Agenda must go hand-in-hand with the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, especially given Africa's invaluable inputs to the 2030 Agenda through its Common African Position on the Post-2015 Deve opment Agenda.

7. For its part, Africa continued popularizing its transformative Agenda 2063 in ways that established alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The African Union made progress in fast-tracking implementation of the 12 flagship projects in the first 10-year implementation plan, including on silencing the guns by 2020 and establishing an African human security index.

8. In just a year, Agenda 2063 has become quite pivotal for mobilizing renewed support for Africa's peace, security and sustainable development priorities. It is becoming instrumental for promoting solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility among African governments, regional and subregional organizations, civil society, the private sector, diasporas, Africa's development partners and the international community towards achieving the "Africa We Want". By declaring 2016 the "Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women", the African Union reaffirmed that women and girls are key pillars and drivers for the implementation of Agenda 2063.

9. In addition, the African Union presented Common African Positions on the 2015 reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and on the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Those reviews collectively demonstrated the enhanced and crucial roles of women in all aspects of peace and security, as also recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 2242 (2015). Given current migration challenges, vis-à-vis their effects on peace and security in Africa, the African Union adopted its Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness, which contributed to the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and outlined a road map for addressing forced displacement in Africa.

10. As highlighted in my report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development and progress in its implementation and international support, (A/71/189), economic growth remained strong on the continent and, according to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is projected to increase to 4.3 per cent in 2016, from 3.7 per cent in 2015. However, to meet Africa's aspirations for peace and prosperity, economic growth must be inclusive and targeted at addressing pressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, corruption, youth unemployment, poor natural resource governance and illicit financial flows, which contribute to exacerbating fragility, instability and conflicts and to facilitating terrorism and violent extremism.

11. On governance, the African Peer Review Mechanism launched a revitalization process in January 2016 aimed at enhancing its institutional, financial and human capacities and strengthening its monitoring activity and methodology to improve good governance on the continent. Outreach activities were undertaken to bolster the membership of African countries in the Mechanism and to solicit support from the international community for its activities.

12. With regard to country-specific situations, elections were conducted in a number of African countries. The introduction of electoral gender quotas in a number of West African countries increased the participation and representation of women in electoral processes and political office. In the Central African Republic, following presidential elections and restoration of constitutional order, the African Union lifted the suspension of participation by the Central African Republic in its activities and reinstated the country into the Union on 31 March 2016. The country's post-transition process will require a focus on, inter alia, an inclusive governance process that will promote reconciliation, the rule of law and human rights, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.

13. Following the visit of the Security Council in January 2016, I undertook a mission to Burundi in February to support efforts to resolve the Burundian political crisis. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund provided $2.3 million in direct support to the African Union Commission for the African Union human rights observers in Burundi, and $300,000 to the field presence in Burundi of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for training and joint monitoring missions with the African Union.

14. The Government of Burundi must genuinely address the political and security situation, guarantee human rights and all fundamental freedoms and ensure accountability for sexual violence. The Government and other stakeholders should cooperate with the African Union human rights observers and fully commit to the ongoing regional efforts, led by the East African Community, to relaunch an inclusive and genuine inter-Burundian dialogue and mediation process. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2279 (2016), in consultation with the Government and in coordination with the African Union, I presented options in my letter dated 15 April 2016 (S/2016/352) for the deployment of a United Nations police contribution to Burundi to increase the capacity of the Organization to monitor the security situation, promote human rights and advance the rule of law, in compliance with its human rights due diligence policy.

15. The Federal Government of Somalia and the leadership of its regional administrations made progress towards forging a federal State. In April 2016, they agreed on detailed modalities for conducting an electoral process to choose the next federal parliament, including committing to a 30 per cent quota for women for which discussion on delivery modalities is ongoing. The country's federal map is now nearly complete, though the one remaining state formation process in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions encountered delays, and talks between the Federal Government and the Somaliland administration remained suspended. The next federal institutions will no doubt have enormous responsibilities, including for completing the constitutional review and ensuring delivery on the commitment to hold universal elections in 2020.

16. Regarding the security situation, Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat, while Somali security institutions have developed more slowly than hoped, despite considerable international support. In April 2016, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army resumed offensive operations under Operation Juba Corridor to destroy Al-Shabaab strongholds and cut their supply routes. However, both forces continue to face challenges, including with respect to ensuring predictable funding for troops. A comprehensive approach is

needed to shore up the security of Somalia, including by ensuring sustained support for AMISOM; active engagement by the country's leadership, which approved a draft national security policy in June 2016 to finalize a federal security architecture and extend State authority country-wide; and the undertaking of broad-based efforts to counter violent extremism. Coherent and sustained support from the country's international partners, including the United Nations system through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, will be essential in the coming years.

17. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political tensions are rising amid delays in preparations for the November 2016 presidential and legislative elections. All stakeholders must shun violence and engage constructively in an inclusive national dialogue aimed at reaching a consensus on the electoral process. The Government is primarily responsible for creating conditions conducive to the conduct of transparent, credible and inclusive elections, and must prioritize the protection of civilians, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law and the neutralization of all rebel and armed groups.

18. In South Sudan, the resumption of fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition, in Juba on 8 July 2016, undermines the peace process. The failure in the security arrangements, in particular the demilitarization of Juba, will require at the very least a renegotiation of the security provisions in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. It will be of critical importance to prioritize the political track, and for the ongoing mediation process, led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to identify ways of ensuring durable political solutions.

19. As far as relations between South Sudan and the Sudan are concerned, the implementation of many aspects of the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan of September 2012 is still pending. Both countries, in cooperation with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, need to resume negotiations to reach an agreement on the final status of the Abyei area. In particular, meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee should be convened, and the Abyei Area Administration and Council and the Abyei Police Service should be established to take over policing functions in the area.

20. The situation in Darfur remained largely unchanged owing to limited progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable political solution, continued fighting between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid in Jebel Marra and persistent intercommunal violence. Approximately 80,000 people have been confirmed displaced since the beginning of 2016, while an additional 127,000 have been reported displaced but not verified by humanitarian actors owing to access restrictions. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur continued to face considerable challenges in implementing its mandate, including armed attacks and other criminal acts, denials of access and freedom of movement, as well as denials and delays in the issuance of visas for international civilian staff and the clearance of shipment containers by the Government of the Sudan.

21. During the period under review, terrorism and violent extremism remained serious threats to peace and security in Africa. Two additional countries, Burkina

Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, experienced terrorist attacks. In Egypt and Tunisia, terrorist activities adversely affected the tourism sectors. In Libya, counter-terrorism measures by the United Nations and the Government of National Accord included efforts to implement an arms embargo and curb and prevent illicit oil exports, which is a source of financing for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

22. The Multinational Joint Task Force, under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, continued their offensive to combat Boko Haram. That resulted in the destruction of many terrorist camps, bomb-making factories and logistics warehouses in the Sambisa Forest in northern Nigeria, as well as the killing and arrest of hundreds of Boko Haram fighters. However, despite progress, challenges remain. Some 2.8 million people remain displaced in the Lake Chad Basin Commission region and 20 million people are experiencing food insecurity. There are continued allegations of human rights abuses by State security forces and growing calls for inclusive development to address the root causes of Boko Haram's emergence.

23. As stated in my last report on the situation in Mali (see S/2016/498), limited progress was made towards the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. Meanwhile, on 19 June 2016, the Government and signatory armed groups signed a memorandum of understanding on the modalities for the establishment of interim authorities. Also, the President appointed a High Representative to follow up on the peace agreement. While there have been no violations of the ceasefire since August 2015, the overall security situation remains a concern owing to the continued activities of terrorist and violent extremist groups. In its resolution 2295 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2017 and authorized the increase of its uniformed personnel by 2,529.

Enhanced focus on the nexus of peace, security and development

24. In a landmark development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 both underscore the importance of the peace-security-development nexus by integrating development, peace, security and human rights goals and priorities. The new approach enhances the ability of Africa and the international community to tackle conflicts in a holistic manner, including by focusing more on prevention and addressing the political and socioeconomic root causes and drivers of violent conflicts.

25. To that end, throughout my engagements with countries in the region I have advocated for an integrated approach to the delivery of United Nations support to Africa. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I strongly emphasized that message at the Private Sector Investment Conference for the Great Lakes Region, in Kinshasa in February 2016, which identified regional investment opportunities, reviewed the investment climate and fostered public-private dialogue on business and job creation, in line with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

26. In March 2016, I visited Tunisia with the Presidents of the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank Group. During the visit we met with government leaders and representatives of both the private sector and civil society, and emphasized the need for balancing the pursuit of security with economic reforms in order to restore

investor confidence and stimulate the creation of decent jobs, especially for Tunisian youth.

III. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the review report

27. The present section highlights recent actions undertaken by the United Nations system to implement recommendations contained in the review report.

A. Institutional cooperation

28. During Africa Week in October 2015, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and its strategic partners (ECA and the Department of Public Information) partnered with the African Union, the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the regional economic communities to organize high-level events that provided an effective platform for highlighting synergies between the peace and development aspirations, goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. The seventeenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, in April 2016, also generated recommendations for enhancing United Nations support to the African Union in implementing Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals in ways that demonstrate the peace-security-development nexus. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa is also reconfiguring its clusters to align with the priorities of Agenda 2063 and has called upon the United Nations to take necessary measures to further enhance its cooperation with the African Union, especially in the context of the implementation of Agenda 2063 and of the renewed framework for the United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda, which was already adopted by the African Union.

29. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the annual joint consultative meeting of the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council in May 2016, both Councils discussed milestones and modalities for developing a more strategic and effective partnership. The United Nations Office to the African Union continued to strengthen the relationship with the African Union Commission across the conflict cycle, in line with the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security of 2014, including through the establishment of joint teams to conduct horizon scanning, develop shared analysis on emerging and existing conflicts and, where feasible, common positions.

B. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and conflict management

30. As part of the Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Political Affairs, 14 Peace and Development Advisers were deployed across the continent to provide substantive technical advice on addressing the multifaceted root causes of conflicts. The United Nations Children's Fund piloted eduTrac, a digital platform, which enhanced the national capabilities for conflict-

sensitive and risk-informed programming of Uganda. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) supported national land policy implementation processes in Uganda, which have proven to be instrumental in preventing land-related disputes. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is developing a strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources to improve community livelihoods and property rights for people displaced by conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

31. The United Nations Office to the African Union and the African Union Commission continued to implement their joint programme to operationalize the African Standby Force. More than 5,000 military, police and civilian personnel participated in the Amani programme's Africa II field training exercise in South Africa from October to November 2015. During the exercise, four of the five regional standby forces, with the exception of the North African Standby Force, declared full operational readiness.

32. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) strengthened its partnership with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security in addressing women's underrepresentation in mediation processes. Both organizations enhanced the strategic inclusion of women mediators in conflict resolution and peace processes across Africa. In Burundi, UN-Women supported a nationwide network of 516 women mediators who collaborated with community and religious leaders to address local conflicts related to the current political crisis.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

33. The Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security convened a wide range of stakeholders in August 2015 to discuss the vital role of young people in sustaining peace. The Forum was jointly organized by several United Nations entities and civil society partners, including the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Forum's Amman Declaration and the advocacy activities of the Sub-Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding laid the groundwork for the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) by the Security Council in December 2015. The resolution, inter alia, calls for increased and inclusive representation of youth in all processes to prevent and resolve conflicts, build peace and counter violent extremism.

34. In May 2016, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the African Union Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office organized a high-level meeting, entitled "Sustaining peace: mechanisms, partnerships and the future of peacebuilding in Africa", to sustain the political momentum for peacebuilding in Africa and discuss effective ways to implement the outcome of the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The meeting outlined proposals for strengthening peacebuilding partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union/AfDB/regional economic communities, and called for adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding, including for the Peacebuilding Fund and African peacebuilding tools and instruments. The meeting welcomed the pledging conference for peacebuilding financing, scheduled for September 2016, to mobilize donor support for the Peacebuilding Fund, consistent with General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016).

D. Sustained economic growth and sustainable development

35. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) adopted new initiatives in July 2015 to support its member States in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The initiatives aim at strengthening national capacities for domestic resource mobilization and public spending efficiency, bolstering support for fragile and conflict affected States and providing policy advice and technical assistance to tackle macroeconomic challenges. Additionally, IMF strengthened the financial safety net for low-income countries by increasing access to all its concessional facilities by 50 per cent. The International Labour Organization developed a strategy for engaging fragile States in Africa, focusing on employment, labour rights, social protection and institution-building.

36. In September 2015, the International Fund for Agricultural Development approved $57 million for a rural development project, co-financed by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development, to support the post-crisis decent rural livelihoods programme of Madagascar. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and IGAD provided technical, analytical and capacity development support in food security, nutrition and resilience analysis to IGAD countries, highlighting the effects of climate change in exacerbating food insecurity, resource scarcity and conflicts.

E. Human rights and humanitarian affairs

37. OHCHR field presences supported governments, civil society and other actors in addressing human rights concerns at regional and national levels. OHCHR assisted various United Nations assessment missions in implementing the Human Rights Up Front initiative, including by deploying human rights officers to Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Congo, Guinea and Lesotho.

38. In November 2015, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes organized a high-level meeting in Durban, South Africa, on conflict-induced migration in Africa. The meeting advocated for integrated and comprehensive approaches to tackling root causes of forced displacement and for enhanced coordination among migration, peace and security actors in Africa. UNHCR organized a High Commissioner's Dialogue in December 2015 on the root causes of displacement, which addressed legal, economic, social and political solutions to the well-being and self-sufficiency of displaced persons. The Valletta Summit on Migration, held in Malta in November 2015, established a 1.9 billion euro trust fund for Africa to address forced displacement in the Sahel region, Lake Chad and the Horn of Africa.

F. Governance, rule of law and the administration of justice

39. OHCHR continued to support the promotion of accountability mechanisms on the continent, including the establishment of the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese judicial system to prosecute the former President of Chad, Hissène Habré, who was convicted of crimes against humanity.

40. UN-Women deployed 25 experts to support investigations and accountability processes for sexual and gender-based offences, including to various commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions established by the Human Rights Council on Eritrea, Libya and South Sudan, as well as to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in the investigation of sexual and gender-based offences in Mali.

G. Women's empowerment and gender equality in peace and security

41. UN-Women supported the establishment of Peace Huts in Mali, thereby fostering women's participation in community dialogues as well as strengthening psychosocial healing and legal assistance for women experiencing conflict-related trauma. The United Nations Population Fund provided emergency obstetric and neonatal care and equipment to tackle sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan.

42. In line with its advocacy mandate, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) by partnering with UN-Women and the African Union Commission to convene a high-level event at United Nations headquarters in New York in October 2015 to showcase Africa's experiences in implementing the resolution. On the margins of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March 2016, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, OHCHR and the African Union organized a high-level event on the opportunities and challenges related to the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women to mobilize support for key African Union priorities for the year. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa also utilized the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development to monitor the implementation of commitments made by Africa and its development partners to women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa, as outlined in my biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development (see A/71/203).

H. Support for security sector reform

43. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations supported the adoption of the Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform and Governance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in June 2016. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations also continued to assist nationally led security sector reform efforts to develop effective and accountable policing and defence institutions, as well as civilian oversight and management bodies. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic supported implementation of the security sector reform provisions in the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction, including an inclusive national security dialogue and the preliminary screening of approximately 2,800 soldiers of the armed forces of the Central African Republic.

44. In Mali, MINUSMA supported the implementation of the defence and security provisions in the peace and reconciliation agreement, coordinated international efforts to reform the Malian security sector, and currently co-chairs the subcommittee on defence and security of the agreement monitoring committee. MINUSMA also supports development of policies on defence, anti-terrorism and border security, and the strengthening of governance and democratic oversight of the security sector.

I. Combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons and transnational organized crimes

45. On the margins of the African Union summit in January 2016, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the African Union jointly convened a high-level panel on "silencing the guns by 2020". The panel, inter alia, encouraged African Member States to ratify key international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, in order to improve the physical security and stockpile management of weapons.

46. The implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative gained traction in the second half of 2015. The transnational organized crime units in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, supported by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, increased their operations and conducted joint regional and international investigations. Consistent with its new regional programme entitled "Promoting the rule of law and human security in Eastern Africa (2016-2021)", the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime redefined its strategic objectives for the region to focus on new and emerging trends in transnational organized crime, including maritime insecurity, wildlife and forest crimes, cybercrimes and the trafficking of migrants.

J. Countering terrorism and violent extremism

47. In February 2016, following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 70/254 welcoming the launch of my Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the Organization has stepped up its assistance to African countries and African regional organizations to combat terrorism and violent extremism. Consistent with the Plan of Action, such assistance underscores the importance of prevention and is grounded on principles of national ownership and United Nations support for national action plans to prevent violent extremism.

48. The Department of Political Affairs, through the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, supported national and regional counter-terrorism efforts. Nationally, support was provided for the integrated implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. Subregionally, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism facilitated the development of regional counter-terrorism strategies in Central and Southern Africa, which were adopted in 2015.

IV. Persistent and emerging challenges confronting Africa: women's human rights for sustainable peace and security

49. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/292, the present section highlights persistent and emerging challenges for Africa, focusing on women's human rights as the basis for sustainable peace and security. Recent major global and continental processes and agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, stress that respect for women's human rights is a critical foundation for peace, security and sustainable development and as such is an essential component of all the core pillars of work of the United Nations and the African Union. The agendas underscore the central role of women in their implementation and also stress that unless the human rights of women are realized it will be impossible to achieve their goals and aspirations.

50. It was quite timely that two African women, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and my former Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, played vital leadership and strategic coordinating roles in the respective formulation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That demonstrates that it is indeed time for action, not just commitment, with regard to African women's leadership.

51. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 provide a basis for addressing the social, economic, political, environmental and humanitarian dimensions of women's human rights in a holistic manner. That is complemented by the outcomes of the reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, all of which specifically address women's human rights in peace and security.

52. Building in particular on those reviews, the present section presents an overview of the state of women's rights with respect to peace and security in Africa. It also outlines the opportunities and entry points the new agendas provide for accelerating targeted actions to protect and promote the rights of African women in peace and security, as well as ways in which the United Nations can further support efforts in that regard.

A. State of women's rights in peace and security in Africa

53. African women experience the impact of violence and wars differently from men, in particular because sexual and gender-based violence is increasingly being used as a tactic and weapon of war and terror. As the reviews mentioned above showed, though women play multiple roles during conflicts, they are largely excluded, marginalized and underrepresented in peace and security processes and structures, especially at formal levels. Their issues and priorities are also often disregarded or only partially included in official peace and security processes, at both strategic and operational levels.

54. Consequently, African governments, regional and subregional organizations and civil society, alongside their international partners, have undertaken initiatives to empower women, protect women's rights and promote gender equality in peace

and security. The initiatives can be classified into four areas: normative and policy developments, promoting the right of women to participation in peace and security, the protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations and the right of women to access services and empowerment.

Normative and policy developments

55. Africa has adopted a range of policy and legal instruments on women's rights. In addition, African Member States are parties to most international instruments on women, peace and security, including general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. One third of the countries globally that have national action plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its related resolutions are in Africa. Other African countries have integrated the resolutions into their national gender policies, development plans, poverty reduction strategies and security and defence policies.

56. Regionally, ECOWAS and IGAD have adopted regional action plans on resolution 1325 (2000). At the continental level, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the African Women's Decade 2010-2020 further reflect Africa's vision and policies for women's rights in peace and security.

57. However, persistent implementation gaps undermine the efficacy of those instruments. The reviews showed that implementation has been slow, ad hoc, limited and uneven, partly owing to the lack of political will and awareness about the policies, deficits in gender expertise, persistent institutional and cultural barriers, inadequate resources and financing, lack of incentives and accountability mechanisms and poor coordination, among other reasons.

Promoting the right of women to participation in peace and security

58. Assessments of women's participation in peace and security in Africa have yielded mixed results. At national levels, while there have been significant gains in women's political participation, leadership and representation in national parliaments, the combined average of women in both lower and upper houses of parliament in sub-Saharan Africa is currently estimated at around 22 per cent, which is still far from the African Union's parity principle.

59. At the continental level, the African Union Commission applies a 50-50 gender parity principle, thereby ensuring the appointment of equal numbers of qualified women and men in its leadership structure. For the first time ever, both the Chairperson and the Secretary-General of the African Union Commission are women. Operationally, within the context of its five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020), the African Union mainstreams gender and women's issues across the African Peace and Security Architecture through a network of gender focal points.

60. Besides those structural arrangements, women also engage on thematic issues. In a number of African countries, Women's Situation Rooms have been established to monitor and potentially prevent or mitigate electoral violence. The Situation Rooms are not, however, systematically linked to the conflict early warning systems

of the African Union and regional economic communities. In peacemaking, recent peace talks in Mali and South Sudan demonstrated that women are still underrepresented in official and formal processes as observers, negotiators, mediators, signatories and witnesses. Nonetheless, as was evident in Burundi, where women successfully mediated more than 3,000 local conflicts, women remain active at informal and community levels.

61. In peacekeeping, African women's participation remains minimal, despite the practice of deploying all-women formed police units or contingents. Consequently, the Common African Position on the Review of United Nations Peace Operations strongly recommended increasing the proportion of women deployed on peace missions and attitudinal changes to eradicate prejudices against women and promote a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.

62. During post-conflict peacebuilding processes, African women have lobbied for their rights to participate in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, transitional justice, security sector reform and post-conflict constitutional reform, among other issues. In some countries, national sector-wide women security staff associations were created to foster women's participation in security sector reform. In the Great Lakes region and the Sahel region, women's platforms were established to enhance implementation of commitments enshrined in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, respectively.

63. As the reviews and the statement by the President of the Security Council of 15 June 2016 (S/PRST/2016/9) highlighted, challenges to women's meaningful participation in peace and security remain. Those include resistance by key actors; symbolism; cultural biases; household responsibilities; time constraints; logistical barriers, including a lack of childcare facilities; limited access to relevant information and financial resources; and growing militarization, terrorism and violent extremism.

Protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations

64. Women's rights are severely undermined in crisis situations, including during violent conflicts, health pandemics and natural disasters. Women and children often constitute the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons. During the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease, more women than men were at risk because of their roles as primary caregivers and custodians of cultural rites for burials. Women and girls' access to basic services such as education are affected by the activities of terrorist and extremist groups. Women, in particular, are also more vulnerable to the effects of climate change as they constitute the bulk of the agricultural workforce and bear the brunt of housework and family care.

65. Africa has undertaken a range of preventative and remedial efforts to enhance the protection of women, especially from sexual violence in conflict. Some countries enforce national laws criminalizing rape and have established special courts to prosecute sexual offences. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the President appointed a Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment. Some countries have created holistic one-stop centres for victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and special protection units within the national police to deal exclusively with such offences. While the units have increased awareness about the problem and improved reporting and conviction

rates, as well as support services for survivors, they are generally underresourced and constrained.

66. Different African regional justice and accountability measures have been set up to monitor, report, investigate and prosecute sexual violence, among other offences. They include the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security; the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese judiciary for the trial of the former President of Chad; the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa; and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

67. Despite those measures, as the three reviews showed, there are still impediments to the protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. Warring factions continue to violate principles of international humanitarian and human rights law, often with impunity. Women survivors of sexual violence are at risk of stigmatization. Women refugees and internally displaced persons risk physical attacks and sexual assault within and outside camps and settlement areas. Women's access to justice, especially at local levels, is largely undermined owing to cultural biases in traditional justice systems.

Right of women to access services and empowerment

68. Both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, as well as the three reviews, stress the need to promote women's empowerment, autonomy and choice as basic human rights. The right of women to education, sexual and reproductive health, inheritance, land, productive resources and access to credit, as well as their right to participation, decision-making and leadership, are all forms of empowerment and are directly linked to women's security. However, most African women do not enjoy those rights and, as observed in the African gender scorecard, at the current pace of progress it will take Africa 81 years to achieve gender equality.

69. The scorecard reveals that despite Africa's good socioeconomic performance, the economic status of most African women has not changed significantly. Women are mostly active in the informal agricultural sector, which is characterized by low wages, investment and productivity, and difficult working conditions. Though African women are breaking new ground in the private sector, they are underrepresented in senior and top leadership positions. Only 4 of the 37 African countries that had available data for the scorecard have close to 50 per cent women in senior-level positions in the private sector. Recognizing that, the high-level event entitled "Women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa: the impact of entrepreneurial education on development", organized by the Government of Italy, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and other partners in June 2016, underscored the crucial need to support women and youth entrepreneurship and enterprises with strong social foundations in Africa.

70. The scorecard's assessment of women's access to land in 33 African countries showed that only 1 country had achieved full parity with respect to gender equality in access to and ownership of land. Obstacles largely derive from discriminatory social and cultural norms relating to inheritance and marriage. That affects many women smallholder farmers, who are unable to access loans to increase their investments and productivity.

71. While the maternal mortality rate fell from 870 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 460 in 2013, Africa still accounts for 63 per cent of maternal deaths globally. Similarly, although the total percentage share of women living with HIV/AIDS and the rates of new infections for all groups have fallen, the rate of infections for adolescent girls has increased. Despite progress towards achieving parity between girls and boys, especially at primary levels, the rate of illiteracy and retention of girls in schools remains a concern, owing to early and forced marriages, gender stereotypes, armed conflicts and the trend of deliberate attacks on girls by terrorist and extremist groups, among other reasons.

B. Opportunities for enhancing women's rights in peace and security in Africa

72. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 present new opportunities for advancing women's rights in peace and security in Africa in ways that substantially ensure women's economic empowerment and access to services. The 2030 Agenda includes a specific goal and cross-cutting targets on gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's rights. It calls for, inter alia, the eradication of all legal, social and economic barriers to women's rights and empowerment and the complete elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including harmful traditional practices. It calls for investments to close the gender gap, including through quality education, women's economic empowerment reforms, access to land and decent employment, financial inclusion and technological support for women in sustainable agriculture and women's participation in peacebuilding and State-building, and for high-quality data disaggregated by gender.

73. The reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security provide recommendations on women's rights, cutting across the continuum of peace and security. All underscore the need to implement existing commitments to women, peace and security, and outline concrete practical proposals for empowering and ensuring women's participation in decision-making and leadership in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and build and sustain peace. The reviews also stress the need for institutional reforms to ensure the means of implementation, including sustained, predictable financing.

74. Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan provide an integrated blueprint for addressing issues relating to women's rights in a holistic manner. It emphasizes the full empowerment of women and girls in all spheres, with equal social, economic and political rights. It calls for the complete eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination against women, and for full gender parity in both public and private sectors. The Agenda 2063 flagship project on silencing all guns by 2020, the African Union's five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme and the forthcoming continent-level results framework on women, peace and security all include specific targets and actions to enhance the implementation of Africa's women, peace and security agenda.

C. Role of the United Nations system in supporting women's rights in peace and security in Africa

75. The promotion of gender equality and women's human rights are central to the realization of the core goals of the United Nations. Consequently, throughout my tenure in office, I have promoted women's rights and gender equality both globally and within the United Nations system. I appointed more than 100 highly qualified women, including African women, as either Under-Secretaries-General or Assistant Secretaries-General. The various entities on gender and women's issues were consolidated into a single strong entity, UN-Women, currently headed by an African woman. Today, eminent women serve as my special representatives and heads of field missions, as opposed to 2006, when there were none. Their presence has dismantled the gendered stereotypes surrounding such positions.

76. The Security Council convenes an Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, with UN-Women as its secretariat, to facilitate a systematic approach and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts on women, peace and security within the Council. The Peacebuilding Commission is expected to adopt its own gender policy to enhance its contributions to gender equality and the empowerment of women in political processes and post-conflict development.

77. The United Nations system continues to support African efforts to advance women's rights and promote women's participation in peace and security, in keeping with the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security and my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, among other efforts. United Nations system entities are encouraged to allocate at least 15 per cent of their peacebuilding funds to projects that address women's specific needs, advance gender equality and empower women. So far, only the Peacebuilding Fund has achieved that goal, and more efforts are required to address funding gaps for the women, peace and security agenda.

78. In that respect, the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, recommended by the Global Study and further recognized by the Security Council in resolution 2242 (2015), will focus on an initial list of 22 countries eligible to receive funding, 10 of which are African. It is important that the Global Acceleration Instrument ensure its funding priorities align with Agenda 2063 and engage similar African mechanisms, such as the African Union Peace Fund and the Fund for African Women.

79. As part of global efforts to eliminate barriers to women's rights, I launched the UNiTE campaign to End Violence Against Women that has increased political support and mobilized resources to prevent and end violence against women and girls. The first annual International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which called for collective action to condemn the use of sexual violence as a deliberate strategy of war, was on 19 June 2016. Amid allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers, the United Nations continues to implement its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and its human rights due diligence policy within its peacekeeping and political missions. The United Nations mobilizes and engages men and boys in promoting the rights of women and gender equality, including through initiatives such as the HeForShe and Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality campaigns, which have contributed to changing mindsets and behaviour, especially among men.

80. The United Nations will continue to engage African Member States, regional and subregional organizations and civil society in implementing and reviewing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2063 Agenda, and in finalizing the development of the continent-level results framework on women, peace and security, which will be a vital instrument for sustaining political momentum for Africa's women, peace and security agenda.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

81. The focus on the human rights of women is a critical part of the global United Nations agenda to uphold the universality and inalienability of the human rights of all persons, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties. As such, it is not an issue for women only. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 highlight the central place and role Africa and African women have played in their realization, and they further outline measures to eliminate discrimination and violence against women, promote gender equality, empower women and fully respect the human rights of women as a basis for achieving inclusive, transformative and sustainable peace and development. Specific measures to promote the rights of women in peace and security are outlined in the recommendations of the reviews of United Nations peace operations and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the Global Study and High-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

82. Implementation of all those measures is critical. African Member States, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector, civil society and the international community, including the United Nations, must implement those renewed commitments in ways that bring about meaningful results for Africa in general and African women and girls in particular. To ensure effectiveness, all global and regional stakeholders must adopt a coherent and harmonized approach throughout the implementation process in order to maximize limited resources, avoid unnecessary fragmentation and duplication and ensure that international support aligns with Africa's own priorities. The implementation process must also include measures to consistently and systematically engage and support African women and girls and African women's organizations.

African countries, the African Union, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Peer Review Mechanism, and regional economic communities

83. African Member States should implement existing international and regional human rights instruments, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. They should adopt and implement national action plans on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in order to enhance meaningful participation of women in national security structures and processes, combat sexual and gender-based violence and ensure predictable resources for implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

84. Consistent with the recommendations of the three reviews, African Member States and regional and subregional organizations should strengthen their investment in effective conflict prevention and human rights. They should foster

stronger partnerships and ensure more predictable financing and greater participation of women and youth in efforts to prevent conflicts and build and sustain peace at all levels, prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism and tackle climate change.

85. African Member States, with the support of the African Union and regional economic communities, should strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of national structures for gender equality and the empowerment of women, including gender and women's affairs ministries. They should also strengthen national accountability and response mechanisms for sexual and gender-based violence. That will require a focus on means of implementation, including financial resources, technology, capacity-building, data and statistics disaggregated by sex and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

86. Consistent with its gender parity principle, the African Union and regional economic communities should enhance the participation and representation of women in all structures for peace and security, including at leadership and decision-making levels. They should promote closer consultation and coordination between their peace and security and gender and women's affairs structures, including in implementing the forthcoming continent-level results framework and regional actions plans on women, peace and security.

87. Institutional linkages among the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Governance Architecture and the development architecture of the African Union, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development, should be strengthened in addressing the structural root causes of conflicts and instability as well as structural violence against women. For instance, coordination among the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Commission's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders should be enhanced.

88. African Member States should implement existing initiatives to eliminate all institutional and cultural barriers to women's human rights. Those include initiatives to eradicate all harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, and end child marriage, such as the Common African Position on the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage, which continues until 2017.

International community and the United Nations system

89. Consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community, including the United Nations system, should support the implementation of Agenda 2063, including by building on its existing support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution to endorse and support the implementation of Agenda 2063, as requested by the African Union in its decision on the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda.

90. To ensure coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, the international community, including the United Nations system, should support Africa's annual stakeholder platforms for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 2063, including the African Union ministerial committee on Agenda 2063. Support should also be provided to both the African Union and the regional

economic communities to develop, finalize and operationalize the African human security index and the African gender scorecard, in line with Agenda 2063.

91. Existing United Nations support to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on women, peace and security, and the Directorate of Women, Gender and Development of the African Union Commission, as well as to the African Union's five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme, should be enhanced, especially with respect to accelerating the finalization of the continent-level results framework on women, peace and security.

92. The United Nations system should further enhance its partnership with the African Union and regional economic communities on human rights, including in implementing the Human Rights Strategy for Africa of the African Union, strengthening support for African human rights organs such as the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Commission's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

African civil society and the private sector

93. African civil society groups, including women's organizations and the media, should systematically support and expand initiatives that target and engage men and boys as champions for women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, including influential male traditional, community and religious leaders.

94. Given strong linkages among women's rights, economic empowerment and women's security, the private sector, within and outside Africa, should enhance support for entrepreneurship development for African women and girls, including by closing the skills gap and promoting women's leadership in the private sector.

United Nations S/2016/656

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 August 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 27 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you of terrorist attacks carried out by armed terrorist groups against peaceful residential neighbourhoods in the city of Qamishli, in Hasakah governorate, and in Damascus.

On the morning of Wednesday, 27 July 2016, the terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacked the city of Qamishli. A suicide bomber detonated a car bomb, targeting the western neighbourhood of the city. According to a preliminary count, 48 civilians were killed and 140 received injuries of varying degrees of severity, the majority of them children, women and old persons. Significant damage was also caused to homes and infrastructure of the neighbourhood.

On Sunday and Monday, 24 and 25 July 2016, the so-called "moderate opposition groups" also targeted peaceful neighbourhoods of Damascus, launching indiscriminate attacks with missiles, rockets and mortars against the neighbourhoods of Abu Rummanah, Bab Tuma and Qaymariyah. A car bomb was also detonated in the residential neighbourhood of Kafr Susah. These terrorist attacks resulted in the deaths of nine civilians, including a mother who was celebrating her daughter's birthday together with her family at a restaurant in the Bab Tuma neighbourhood of the old city of Damascus.

On 24 July 2016, these so-called moderate terrorists also targeted several residential neighbourhoods of the city of Aleppo, firing missiles, hell cannons and mortar shells and killing a woman and her child in the Khalidiyah neighbourhood. These bloody terrorist acts resulted in the injury of dozens of civilians, mostly children, women and the elderly, and caused extensive destruction to homes, schools, hospitals and infrastructure in these peaceful residential neighbourhoods.

These terrorist attacks, and other such acts, constitute a continuation of the systematic terrorist acts committed against the Syrian people by armed terrorist groups supported and funded by foreign States. These groups are now well known to all, and include the terrorist Nusrah Front, the Army of Islam, Ahrar al-Sham, the Army of Conquest, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki brigade and the organization ISIL. Their acts of terrorism represent systematic and continued violations of the cessation of hostilities agreement, in a new and shameless attempt by the regimes in Riyadh, Doha, Ankara, Paris and Tel Aviv that support and sponsor terrorism to undermine efforts aimed at preventing the loss of Syrian lives and to thwart the de-escalation arrangements, and, in anticipation of a new round of Geneva talks, to ensure that the talks fail. It is shameful that certain members of the Security Council are continuing to prevent the Council from taking immediate deterrent and punitive measures

against the States and regimes that support and finance terrorism — in particular, the regimes in Riyadh, Ankara, Doha, Paris and London. Such action only serves to give those regimes the green light to order their terrorist proxies in Syria to continue committing terrorist acts and massacres against the Syrian people, thereby destabilizing peace and security in Syria, the region and the world.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in this context, cautions against the desperate attempts by regimes that sponsor, support and fund terrorism, which are endeavouring to cosmeticize the terrorist organization Nusrah Front. The organization aims to circumvent the Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism by shedding its skin and changing its name, and by issuing declarations on the ostensible severing of ties between the Nusrah Front and the terrorist Al-Qaida organization. It intends thereby to protect itself from international prosecution and follow-up under the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating and suppressing terrorism. This will also give it the necessary political cover for it to continue in the task assigned to it by its sponsors of slaughtering the Syrian people and undermining security and stability in Syria and the region, in fulfilment of dubious foreign agendas. The Syrian Government stresses that it will not be fooled by failed attempts such as these, nor will they fool any of the States that are sincere in their efforts to combat terrorism and to eradicate this scourge.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that these terrorist massacres and crimes will not deter it from continuing to perform its duty to fight against terrorism and to strive for a political solution to the Syrian crisis through an intra-Syrian dialogue under Syrian leadership, leading to the eradication of terrorism, the rebuilding of all that has been destroyed by the terrorists and their partners, financial backers and supporters, and the restoration of security and stability for the Syrian people.

The Government urges the members of the Security Council who objected to the inclusion of the Army of Islam and Ahrar al-Sham on the Security Council list of terrorist individuals, entities, groups and institutions, to reconsider their position on this, and instead to take the initiative of including other terrorist organizations, such as the Nur al-Din al-Zanki organization, the Army of Conquest, the Army of Islam, on the Security Council lists of terrorist groups and entities. In this way they will demonstrate their determination to fight international terrorism, which has become a threat to the security and stability of the peoples of the entire world. The Syrian Government has given warning of this and will continue to do so. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to condemn these terrorist crimes immediately and forcefully. It also calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by taking preventive and punitive measures immediately in respect of those regimes and States that support and fund terrorism, in particular the regimes of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. The Council must prevent those States from continuing to fund terrorism and to undermine international peace and security, and must compel them to implement fully the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative